

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of claims

1-8. (*cancelled*)

9. (*New*) A method for the prevention, inhibition and treatment of sepsis in an animal or patient at risk for sepsis comprising:

- a) testing a biological sample from said animal or patient for the presence of anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies wherein an elevated level of said antibodies compared to a healthy control is indicative of the presence of sepsis, sepsis-like systemic inflammation and/or infection;
- b) treating said animal or patient by at least one of
 - i) removal of anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies;
 - ii) administration of an agent which binds or blocks anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies or
 - iii) administration of antibiotics.

10. (*New*) The method of claim 9, wherein said agent comprises gangliosides AG_{M1} and/or G_{M1} and/or substances which simulate the carbohydrate moiety of said gangliosides with regard to binding anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies.

11. (*New*) The method of claim 9 wherein said treating step comprises extracorporeal removal of anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies from blood by plasmapheresis.

12. (*New*) The method of claim 11, wherein said plasmapheresis is performed with affinity material comprising gangliosides, AG_{M1} and/or G_{M1} and/or substances which simulate the carbohydrate moiety of the gangliosides with regard to binding to anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies.

13. (New) A method for screening substances which simulate the carbohydrate moiety of the gangliosides AG_{M1} and/or G_{M1} with regard to binding to anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies comprising:

- a) adding the test substance to serum having a high ganglioside antibody titer;
- b) determining the binding behavior of said substance; and
- c) comparing the binding behavior of said substance with binding behavior of a substance-free sample, wherein a decrease the binding is reduced in the presence of substances which simulate the carbohydrate moiety of the gangliosides AG_{M1} and/or G_{M1} with regard to binding to anti-AG_{M1} antibodies and/or anti-G_{M1} antibodies).